

## **DEVELOPING CHARACTER-BASED READING MATERIALS FOR THE EIGHTH YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 1 SINGARAJA IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2012-2013**

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### **Abstract**

This study is a Research and Development study (R&D) which aimed at developing Character-Based Reading Material for the eighth year students of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja in the academic year of 2012-2013. This study used Sugiyono's model of Research and development. Based on the syllabus analysis and the existing reading materials, the result shows that the existing reading material has some weaknesses in terms of its feature, content, language used, and exercises. These weaknesses were supported by the result of questionnaire administered to the students which is showed that 62.50% of the students strongly disagree and 37.50% disagree that the existing reading material covered character values.

Based on the result of the analysis, the researcher developed Character-Based Reading materials which covers three genres and each genre consists of four reading passage. The values introduced in the texts were 16 values or characters which are proposed by the Board of National Education Standard (BSNP), comply with School Based Curriculum, the criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson (2012).

Based on the result of analysis on the quality of Character-Based Reading material it was found that the result of rubric administered to the students showed that the quality of Character-Based Reading materials were considered as *Good materials* while based on teacher's result, the quality of Character-Based Reading material were considered as *Excellent material*.

The final product of this study was the Character-Based Reading materials for the eighth year students of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja which involves reading passage and varieties of exercises related to the reading passage.

*Keywords: character, reading material, character-based reading material*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20, Year 2003 on National Education System stated that the the function of national education is to develop the capability, character, and civilization of the nation for enhancing its intellectual capacity, and is aimed at developing learners' potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God; who possess morals and noble character; who

are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent; and as citizens, are democratic and responsible.

In line with the goal and function stated above, National Ministry of Education since 2010 developed character-based education for all level of education including Secondary education unit. The aim of the implementation of character based education is to develop students' good and strong character and at last it will build a good and strong Indonesian character

which consists of four basic foundations namely, Spiritual and emotional development (*olah hati*), Intellectual development (*olah pikir*), physical and kinesthetic development (*olah raga dan kinestetik*) and effective and creativity (*olah rasa dan karsa*). This character based education is then implemented by each education unit through the Educational Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) which is emphasized on developing ability of the learners to mastery a competence of knowledge and values used in various fields of life.

In the implementation of Educational Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP), character values can be inserted as content to enrich the main teaching material. One of the aspects in supporting the success of teaching learning process as well as to teach life values to the students is by designing adequate and appropriate reading materials because reading texts is one of useful media in transferring knowledge as well as values. Furthermore through the use of a particular reading theme, students will get information, knowledge and also values which can be actualized in their daily life. Therefore, teachers should provide themselves with a character based Reading material to be used in the teaching learning process, especially in reading skill. Inserting character values in Reading text is important as to educate students the life values as it is assigned by the government. It can be in the form of personal descriptions, stories and or experiences and also personal opinions. By doing so, it is hoped that the knowledge and values transferred through the reading material will be beneficial to the students. It implies that a good quality of reading material delivered in the teaching learning process should be effectively developed. Therefore a good quality of reading material will provide a positive contribution to the success of the teaching learning process.

Preliminary observation on curriculum, syllabus and reading material used by the teacher of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja showed that there were 18

character values stated in the curriculum to be integrated in teaching and learning process but only three of them used in the syllabus. While in the reading material used in the classroom by the teacher, it was found that there were no character values inserted in the reading text since the vocabulary used did not introduce character values. Activity designed as the pre and post reading activity did not involve the insertion of character values as well. The reading materials used in the classroom were still using text books or students worksheet that had been used for many years. It means that the sources of the material used by the teacher were already out of date and had not been a character based yet. Moreover, pre-interview showed, teachers also asserted the importance of teaching character values to the students and they also proposed that reading material should cover character values. However, they found difficulties in developing character-based English teaching material for year 8 regarding to the lack of knowledge and experience on how to develop a good reading material as well as inserting the character value on the text. They also had a difficulty in deciding which character should be inserted in the reading material.

This study undertook on developing Character based Reading material for the eighth grade students of Junior High School of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. The outputs of this study was proto-types of English Reading materials appropriate for junior secondary school which is inserting life values on its reading text as well as on its assessments.

### **Character**

Wood (2008) noticed character as a distinctive trait; behavioral typical of a person or group; moral and reputation. She defined character as an evaluation of a particular individual's moral qualities. She further explained that character imply a variety of attributes including the existence of lack of virtues such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty and loyalty, or of good behaviors or habits. While Hill in Chrisiana

(2005) defined character as a personal identity, personality and novelty which is embedded in every person. He further stated that character is always having a close relation to person's physical and psychological dimension. He noticed that character is contextual and cultural and determines someone's private thoughts and someone's action done. He further explains that good character is the inward motivation to do what is right, according to the highest standard of behavior in every situation. In this case character is defined as someone's identity. Character can also be defined as the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. It can be also defined as the peculiar quality, or the sum of qualities, by which a person or a thing is distinguished from others. Tadkiroatun Musfiroh, 2008, a character is defined as a set of attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and skills. Moreover, Indonesian government proposed 18 character values that should be inserted into teaching material stated in The Pilot book of The Development of Culture and Character-based Education, Center of Board of Curriculum Research and Development, Ministry of National Education, 2010, for Junior High School especially for English Lesson, they are: *Religious, Honest, Tolerance, Discipline, Hard work, Creative, Independent, Democratic, Curious, Patriotism, Nationalism, Respect, Friendly/Communicative, Peace, Reading Habits, Environment concern, Socialable and Responsible*

#### **Reading material**

Reading is the process of constructing meaning from a text, whether written or graphic, paper-based or digital. In reading, reader can get some information and knowledge from the texts. It also gives the reader enjoyment. Gillet and Temple in Adnyani (2010) defines reading as a process of making sense of words, sentence and connected text. The aim of reading is to understand what is read which is involving prior knowledge, knowledge of text structure and also the ability of seeking information correct and appropriately in it. While according to Tomlinson in 2012,

language learning material is defined as anything that can be used to facilitate the learning of a language, including course books, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites and mobile phones interactions, though, inevitably, much of the literature focuses on printed materials.

Furthermore, Tomlinson proposed 16 criteria of good materials, they are; Materials should achieved impact; Materials should help learners to feel at ease; Materials should help learners to develop confidence; What is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful; Materials should require and facilitate learners self-investment; Learners must be ready to acquire the points being taught; Materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use; The learners' attention should be drawn to linguistics features of the input ; Material should provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes; Materials should take into account that the positive effect of instruction are usually delayed; Materials should take into account that learners differ in learning style; Materials should take into account that learners differ in affective attitudes; Materials should permit a silent period at the beginning of instruction; Materials should maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities; Material should not rely too much on controlled practice; Materials should provide opportunities for outcome feedback

#### **Character-based reading materials**

In this study, character based reading material was reading material in the form of text book which the characters proposed by the government of Indonesia are inserted in the reading text and its exercises. All those characters that implicitly inserted in the reading materials, were also considering the universal character values proposed by Thomas Lickona known as Five Core Ethical Values which consist of Caring, Honesty, Fairness,

Responsibility and Respect for self and others and also The Six Pillars of Character proposed by Josephson Institute, including Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

Those 18 character values would be distributed in to three genre of text namely; descriptive, recount, and exposition and insrted into the four aspects of reading material; feature, content, language use, and assessment. Feature of reading material was the display and the appearance of the reading material. It includes the pictures and illustration used in the readng material, the color, the font and also the general indicators of the reading material. Content of the reading material was about the story, the theme, and also the topic in the reading text. While the language use was about the tenses and grammar and also vocabulary introduced in the reading text. The last was the asesment which had relation with the learning activities and also type of assessment included in the reading text. Tomlinson's criteria of good material used as guidelines in developing character based reading material

## METHOD

This study was aim at developing chracter based reading material which based on Sugiono's model of research and development. There were some procedures done, they were Problem identification, Data collection, Product design, Design validation, Design Revision, Field test, and Final product. This study was conducted in SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja in the academic year of 2012-2013. The subject of this study was the students and teacher of the eighth year students of Junior High School of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. Numbers of students involved in this study were 24 students. It consists of 10 males and 14 female. While the object of the study was Character based reading materials. Data obtained in this study was from the rubric and questionnaire administered to both students and teachers to gain feedback from them. Reading comprehension test

was also used to obatain score on students' reading comprehension. Those data then analyzied descriptively and qualitatively by using percentage formula and Candiasa's model of analysis. Candiasa's model of analysis was used to know te quality of the reading material. In the formula, the score in the rubric would be formulated then the result would be categorized in to the following rating scale; excellent material, good material, average material, below material and poor material.

Score	Criteria
$\bar{X} \geq 153$	Excellent Material
$119 \leq \bar{X} < 153$	Good Material
$85 \leq \bar{X} < 119$	Average Material
$51 \leq \bar{X} < 85$	Below Average Material
$\bar{X} < 51$	Poor Material

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In problem identification it was found that there was no comptibility of the curriculum, syllabus, and also reading material used by the teacher. In the curriculum stated that there were 18 character values that should be inserted and implemented in teaching and learning process. While in the syllabus, it was found that there were only three character values included in the syllabus for three genre of text in one semester. Observation on the existing reading material done in four major aspect of reading material, they were the feature, the content, the language use, and the asesment.

In terms of the feature of the reading material it was found that the feature of reading material introduced in the book was fairly enough and it had a clear and readable font type. The pictures of the reading material in the book were fairly clear which most of the pictures were presented in Black and White color. Language used presented in every texts was considered as a fairly enough. On one hand, it had some difficult words and on the other hand, some words were easily to understand by the students. However, the

vocabulary, phrases and sentences introduced in the texts were not character-based yet. The researcher found out that the assessments which are related to the Reading material did not vary. In other words, the reading materials were lack of kind of exercises. As it was observed, every Reading material consists of only two to three related exercises. The exercises were in the form of Pre-Reading questions, Wh-questions and writing task.

To support this fact, rubric was administered to the teacher to obtain his opinion on the existing reading material he used in teaching and learning process. The result of the rubric was analyzed by using Candiasa's formula. The following table is the result of the teacher's rubric.

No	Text Genre	Score	Category
1.	Descriptive	94	Average
2.	Recount	85	Average
3.	Exposition	82	Below Average

The above table means that the quality of reading material used by the teacher were still not a good reading material in which for descriptive and recount text were in average reading material category while exposition text was in below average reading material category.

Knowing the above fact, character based reading material was developed by considering the weaknesses found in the preobservation. Tomlinson's criteria of good material was used as guidelines in designing character based reading material which included the 18 character values proposed by government. The 18 character values then inserted into the four major aspects of reading material namely the feature, the content, the language use and also the assessment.

Feature of the character-based reading material was about the general indicators, the appearance of the reading text, the picture and illustration, and also the choice of the font of the reading material. General indicators presented the standard and basic competency, the indicators and also the character traits that were going to introduce in the reading text.

Pictures and illustrations were used in the pre and post reading material which made as interesting to attract the students' interest and they contained character values that implicitly made the students aware on the values focused in the reading text. Font type and color were chosen to make the feature of the reading text interesting to avoid students from feeling bored. Topic, themes and the story in the reading text were mainly very close to students' daily life. It presented in more simple way and interesting to the students so that the students could be easier to understand the text. In relation to the insertion of character values in the texts, not all the character values stated explicitly in the text but some of them stated implicitly so that the students could take the values by using their knowledge and understanding. Character based reading material introduce variative sentences with correct grammar and tenses based on the students' level. Character values were introduced through the use of vocabulary. There were some terms of values introduced in the reading text which and some of character values given implicitly, for example by giving the definition or the example to explain the terms of the values. Exercises presented in character based reading material consisted of Literal comprehension questions, Recalling main idea and details, Sequencing, Matching words and Responding to reading passage. Character values were inserted into those exercises and also in the instruction used in each exercise. Some activities were designed individually and also in pair. There were opportunity for the students to work together with their partner so that they could share the idea, knowledge, and experience in the learning activities. From those activity the students could implement character values of cooperation, tolerance and also appreciation.

The results of the field test on character based reading material were taken from students' average on reading comprehension and also the result of teacher's rubric.

### Result from the students

To know the quality of character based reading material designed by the researcher, the character based reading material then tested to the students so that the researcher could obtain some score of Result of Students' reading comprehension

reading comprehension from the students. the following table is students' average on reading comprehension using the existing reading material comparing to students' average on reading comprehension using character based reading material which obtained from two cycles.

No	Genre	Existing Material	Note	Average			
				Cycle 1	Note	Cycle 2	Note
1	Descriptive	78.50	Not Achieved	83.12	Achieved	92.20	Achieved
2	Recount	75.76	Not Achieved	81.87	Achieved	88.12	Achieved
3	Exposition	75.30	Not Achieved	81.45	Achieved	86.45	Achieved
Total Average		76.52	Not Achieved	82.15	Achieved	88.93	Achieved

The passing grade for reading at SMP N 1 Singaraja is 80. So, from the table we can see that the students' average on reading comprehension using existing reading material was still under the passing grade. In cycle 1, students average improved from 76.52 to 82.15 and from not achieved category to achieved category. In the field test done by the researcher on cycle 2, it

was found that the average score for all genre of text were above the passing grade. In descriptive text, there were three students who obtained maximum score that was 100 and the class average was 92.20. Similar with decriptive text, class average on the other two text, recount and Exposition were also above the passing grade which were 88.12 and 86.45.

### Result on students' rubric

Text Genre	Existing Reading Material		Character based Reading material	
	Score	Rating	Score	Rating
Descriptive	87.70	Average material	140.70	Good material
Recount	69.20	Below Average material	142.67	Good material
Exposition	83	Average material	141.67	Good material

Score obtained from the students' rubric gave clear description that the quality of the reading material used by the teacher was still in average category for descriptive and exposition text. The rubric also showed that recount text obtained the lowest score which was only 69.20 and could be categorized as below average material. Some students thought that recount text was more difficult in terms of the grammar. It supported by the students' opinion in which most students did not agree to the statement in the rubric which stated that reading material was simple and easy to understand and the use of sentences in the text were based on the students' level. It means that the students felt the grammar was not easy and difficult to understand.

Quality of character based reading material was better than the existing reading material used by the teacher. All three genre of the text can be categorized as good material according to the students.

### Result from the teacher

Using Candiasa's model of Analysis on the quality of reading material, the result of teacher's questionnaire showed that the quality of character based reading material could be categorized as excellent material. It was different from the result of the questionnaire on the existing reading material used by the teacher which was only in the average level of quality. For clearer comparison, the following table is the result of the questionire on the existing

reading material and character based of readingmaterial.

Result of students and teacher's rubric on the product

No	Text Genre	Existing Reading Material		Character based reading material	
		Score	Category	Score	Category
1.	Descriptive	95	Average	164	Excellent material
2.	Recount	85	Average	159	Excellent material
3.	Exposition	82	Below Average	163	Excellent material
Average		87.33	Average	162	Excellent

All the result showed that character based reading material designed by the reasearcher got positive feedback from both teacher and also students. It can be seen from the percentage of teacher and students' agreement were higher than their disagreement on the statement in the rubric and questionnaire. Students' average on Reading test after using the character based reading material was also could achieve the passing grade, the class average for the three genre was 88.93.

Using Candiasa's model of Analysis on the quality of reading material, the result of teacher's questionnaire showed that the quality of character based reading material could be categorized as excellent material. It was different from the result of the questionnaire on the existing reading material used by the teacher which was only in the average level of quality. For clearer comparison, the following table were the result of the questionire on the existing reading material and character based of reading material.

## CONCLUSION

The product of this study was in the form of character-based reading material for the eighth year students of Junior High School in SMP N 1 Singaraja which consist of three genre of text namely descriptive, recount, and exposition and each genre had four reading texts. This character-based reading material was designed based on Tomlinson's criteria of good material which was inserted the 18 chracter values proposed by Pilot book of The Development of Culture and Character-based Education, Center of Board of Curriculum Research and Development, Ministry of National Education, 2010 into the four aspects of

reading material; feature, content, language use, and asesment.

Feature of the character- based reading material was about the general indicators, the appearence of the reading text, the picture and illustration, and also the choice of the fornt of the reading material. General indicators presented the standard and basic competency, the indicators and also the character traits that were going to introduce in the reading text. Pictures and illustrations were used in the pre and post reading material which made as interesting to attract the students' interest and they contained character values that implicitly made the students aware on the values focused in the reading text. Font type and color were chosen to make the feature of the reading text interesting to avoid students from feeling bored.

Topic, themes and the story in the reading text were mainly very close to students' daily life. It presented in more simple way and interesting to the students so that the students could be easier to understand the text. In relation to the insertion of character values in the texts, not all the character values stated explecitely in the text but some of them stated implicitly so that the students could take the values by using their knowledge and understanding.

Character based reading material introduce variative sentences with correct grammar and tenses based on the students' level. Character values were introduced through the use of vacabulary. There were some terms of values introduced in the reading text which and some of character values given implicitly, for examaple by

giving the definition or the example to explain the terms of the values.

Exercises presented in character based reading material consisted of Literal comprehension questions, Recalling main idea and details, Sequencing, Matching words and Responding to reading passage. Character values were inserted into those exercises and also in the instruction used in each exercise. Some activities were designed individually and also in pair. There were opportunity for the students to work together with their partner so that they could share the idea, knowledge, and experience in the learning activities. From those activity the students could implement character values of cooperation, tolerance and also appreciation.

In short, it can be concluded that character-based reading material was designed based on the criteria of good reading material which included the 18 character values stated in the curriculum of character education inserted into the four aspects of reading material.

Since the present study was done in the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja only, further field test needs to be conducted in different schools in order to know whether the Character-based reading material developed by the researcher suitable with the teacher and students' need in that schools.

The implication of this study is that the teachers of grade eight of SMPN 1 Singaraja can use the character-based reading material developed in teaching English. This material will be suitable for the needs of the teacher and students of eight grade of SMPN 1 Singaraja since it was developed especially for and based on the needs of the teachers and students of grade eight of SMPN 1 Singaraja in learning English.

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